



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of the Superintendent
3655 U.S. Highway 211E.
Luray, VA 22835
540-999-3500 phone
540-999-3601 fax

Shenandoah National Park News Release

For Immediate Release – April 20, 2006
Contact James Åkerson, (540) 999-3496

Save the Meadow Weekend (Invasive Plants!) **May 20-21, 2006** **Shenandoah National Park is Recruiting Volunteers to Help Fight** **Against Exotic Plants at Big Meadows**

Shenandoah National Park invites the public to join in a weekend of learning and participation in the control and identification of invasive exotic plants, May 20-21, 2006. (Rain dates are June 3-4, 2006.) Park staff and volunteers will describe the situation of invasive plant threats and current impacts on native wildflowers. They will also lead expeditions around Big Meadows where the public may join in to protect the meadow's beauty by controlling known invasive plant threats. *Save the Meadow Weekend* is intended to show how the public can volunteer to fight back against invasive plants and how with simple awareness they can avoid environmental problems at home.

Activities begin at Big Meadows Lodge in the Massanutten Room at 9:00 A.M. Saturday and 10:30 A.M. Sunday with an informative talk called the "Story of Natives." The talk is followed by a hands on activity in the Big Meadow. The talk will be repeated at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday. Free park admission to attend the event is available by contacting the *Save the Meadow Volunteer Leader* in advance at (540) 999-3496.

Over 23 percent of the plant species at Shenandoah National Park are not native to the area. Many of those plants do not have the natural biological control agents from their home environments and thus have unfair advantage over natives. They are invasive. Though exotic plants are not new to the area, the impacts of invasive exotics are increasingly serious. Native species are being displaced and the processes of forest succession are being stopped by the overwhelming presence of such plants as garlic mustard, kudzu, mile-a-minute vine, Oriental bittersweet, tree of heaven and others. Without controls, it may become impossible to maintain the Park's designated federal wilderness in a natural untrammelled condition. By presidential Executive Order #13112, the National Park Service and other federal agencies are directed to control invasive species and ensure that no new exotic infestations become established.

Save the Meadow Weekend is part of a larger program for increasing public volunteerism in national parks and is made possible by a grant from the National Park Foundation and Tauck Foundation.

ARAMARK Convention and Tourism Services, the authorized concessioner responsible for providing lodging and other visitor services in the park, invites people interested in staying overnight to contact them for reservations at (800) 999-4714.

For more information on *Save the Meadow Weekend* events, contact the Shenandoah National Park's Invasive Plant Management office at 540-999-3496 or visit the Park's website at <http://www.nps.gov/shen/>.

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